GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2372
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2016
Ashgabat Agreement
Adsul Shri Anandrao ;Pradhan Shri Nagendra Kumar;Raut Shri Vinayak Bhaurao;Shinde Dr. Shrikant Eknath;Shrirang Shri Chandu Barne

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has decided to accede to the Ashgabat Agreement which is an international transport and transit corridor facilitating the transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf;
(b) if so, the details thereof along with the salient features of the said agreement;
(c) whether joining the corridor is likely to facilitate India"s trade with the Eurasian region as well as the creation of the International North South Transport Corridor between India and Russia;
(d) if so, the details thereof along with the names of the other member countries of the said agreement; and
(e) the extent to which India is likely to be benefited from the said agreement?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Government of India has submitted the original Instrument of Accession to the Depository State (Turkmenistan) on 28 April, 2016 conveying its intention to formally accede to the Ashgabat Agreement.

The said agreement, inter alia, aims to:
i. Increase the speed of the Transport of Goods and Passengers with the aim of optimizing transport costs and take all the necessary measures to provide assistance to each other through investment in transport infrastructure projects along the International Transport and Transit Corridor;
ii. Provide effective facilities in respect with the International Transport and Transit of Goods and Passengers through their territories in accordance with their national legislation;
iii. Facilitate access to international markets by using land/sea transportation through the International Transport and Transit Corridor;
iv. Facilitate granting of visas to the citizens of the other Contracting Party who are engaged in International Transport and Transit of Goods and Passengers in accordance with its national legislation;
v. Optimize government taxes, excise and other duties, regardless of their nature or purpose, including charges emanating from the services on Goods in Transit;
vi. Ensure travel safety and implement international safety standards with respect to the Transport and Transit of Goods and Passengers, as well as environmental protection in accordance with the international standards; etc.

(c), (d) & (e): Accession to the Ashgabat Agreement is aimed at utilisation of the existing transport and transit corridor arrangement to facilitate trade and commercial interactions between India and the Eurasian region, in general and Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in particular, as these two countries are not member to the International North South Transport Corridor Agreement.

Oman, Qatar, Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were the founding member countries to the Agreement which was signed on 25 April, 2011. Subsequently, Qatar withdrew from this Agreement in 2013 and Kazakhstan joined the Agreement in February 2015.

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